



US Forest Service

Orleans

Site Handbook





Watershed Stewards Project Mission

The mission of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project is to conserve, restore, and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high quality scientific practices.



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Introduction



Orleans Bridge on Highway 96 just outside Orleans, CA

Site Description

Location 1 Ishi Pishi Road, Orleans, CA 95556

Agency Affiliation US Forest Service, Orleans Ranger District

General Ecology Orleans is located at river mile 58 on the Wild and Scenic Klamath River amid steep and rugged mountains. The seasons are characterized by a hot, dry summer followed by a mild, rainy winter. Mixed conifers and hardwoods make up the majority of the local forest, and there are many trails and recreation activities available on the 1 million acres of Six Rivers National Forest.

Site Mentor Contact Info

LeRoy Cyr – P.O. Box 410, Orleans, CA 95556

Work Phone: (530) 627-3262

Cell Phone: (530) 262-1790



Description of Site Duties



This site will keep you busy and challenged. There is a large emphasis on watershed and fisheries field work and environmental education. Be prepared to work hard, both physically and mentally. The season will kick off in grand fashion with snorkel fish surveys on the Wild and Scenic Salmon River that will take place one day per week throughout the Fall season. In addition, you will get a chance to see much of the area while partnering with local state and federal agencies, tribes and community members to assess the number of the fall Chinook found within the tributaries of the lower-mid Klamath Basin the other 3 days. You will also participate in a wilderness 3 day spike up Wooley Creek, a beautiful wilderness stream in the Marble Mountains, and will quickly fall in love with this remote and pristine landscape.

During early winter, you will be expected to create a hands-on, engaging environmental education curriculum for children within the local river schools. You will meet with teachers within the Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District and plan your 6-week program. Many of these students are VERY familiar with their rivers, and all things salmon (they might even teach you something). As the education season ends, you will help to install and operate two rotary screw traps on Camp and Red Cap Creeks to catch out-migrating juvenile salmonids and other aquatic organisms.

Days will be getting warmer and with summer quickly approaching it will soon be time to help plan the Annual Fish Fair and Salmon Relay Run as a part of the Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District Committee. Fish Fair is a fun day of watershed education, games, and crafts striving to make learning fun for over 1000 students. You will also help with organizing and planning a Salmon Relay Run along 40+ miles of the Klamath-Trinity River corridor. As soon as these events are over, you will quickly move on to plan the Orleans Fishing Derby that is held annually at Fish Lake, a beautiful 22 acre high mountain lake. This day is a blast and you will be sure to enjoy watching the smiles on the kids' faces when they bring their fish to get weighed and measured.

After a busy education season, you will be glad to get out into the field again to enjoy the beautiful summer weather. Much of the summer season is spent in the water or hiking to collect biological data or species and habitat inventories. There are also a number of different watershed restoration projects that take place every year on the Orleans District which will provide you with tons of opportunities. Your term in Orleans is sure to open your eyes to the wonderful Klamath Mountains with much to offer the intrepid adventurer.



General Calendar of Duties at USFS Orleans

Month	Location	Site Duties	Work Load	Typical Work Hours
Fall/Winter				
October	Field	WSP Member Orientation, Dive and Spawning Training, Fall Chinook Spawning Surveys	Very Busy	10 hour days – 4 days/wk (M-Th 7:00-5:30)
November	Field	Fall Chinook Spawning Surveys	Very Busy	10 hour days – 4 days/wk (M-Th 7:00-5:30))
December	Field	Fall Chinook and Coho Spawning Surveys	Very Busy	10 hour days – 4 days/wk (M-Th 7:00-5:30)
Winter/Spring				
January	Office	Meet with teachers within Klamath-Trinity Unified School District, prep for education season	Moderate	8 hour days – 5 days/wk (M-F 8:00-4:30)
February	Office/ Class	Teach real science curriculum to local river school students, raise steelhead within local classrooms	Busy	8 hour days – 5 days/wk (M-F 8:00-4:30)
March	Office / Class	Continue teaching real science curriculum, assist with downstream migrant trap placement and operations, begin to plan Salmon Run and Fish Fair	Very Busy	8 hour days – 5 days/wk (M-F 8:00-4:30)
Spring				
April	Office / Field	DSM trapping, planning Salmon Run and Fish Fair activities	Very Busy	8 hour days – Maxiflex 7 days/wk due to trap operations (M-S 8:00-4:30)
May	Office / Field	DSM trapping, planning Fishing Derby event and Fish Fair activities	Very Busy	8 hour days – Maxiflex 7 days/wk due to trap operations (M-S 8:00-4:30)
June	Office / Field	Fish Fair, Salmon Run, and Fishing Derby events, launch temperature loggers and prepare for summer surveys, watershed restoration projects get underway	Very Busy	8 hour days – Maxiflex 7 days/wk due to trap operations (M-S 8:00-4:30)
Summer				
July	Field	Wrap up rotary screw trap effort, salmonid and fisheries habitat assessments	Very Busy	10 hour days – 4 days/wk (M-Th 7:00-5:30)
August	Field	Salmonid survey assessments and habitat surveys	Very Busy	10 hour days – 4 days/wk (M-Th 7:00-5:30)
September	End of term			



ISPs and Outreach Events



Individual Service Project Information

Most ISPs take place in mid-summer, when stream flows settle down. The actual events are extremely varied. They range from instream large woody debris installation to upslope enhancement, rafting restoration trips on the Klamath, pulling noxious weeds and restoring wilderness trails. Keep yourself aware of what is going on in other departments at the Forest Service. There are plenty of opportunities to take on some responsibilities with something they're already working on and make it your ISP.

Year 15 Members, Emily Cira, Michael Kein, and Rusty White add large woody debris into a small coho stream. This restoration project was Rusty's ISP for that year.

Outreach Information

You can work at a multitude of community outreach events with many collaborators such as the Mid-Klamath Watershed Council, the Karuk, Yurok or Hoopa Tribes, Rod and Gun Club, the Salmon River Restoration Council, and local river schools.

Calendar of Outreach Events for Site / Community

- Late April* Tony Hacking Memorial International Migratory Bird Day
- Late May/ June* Klamath-Trinity Fish Fair and Salmon Relay Run
- Early June* Orleans Fishing Derby
- Late July* Salmon River Dives
- All summer long* MKWC's Outdoor School (optional)
- All year long* Fundraisers, events, etc. with the local non-profits (optional)



Education

Education Notes



YR 16 member, Haley Carlson, assists Buck Logan and Esmerelda Ruiz with a fish painting.



Children watch as we test their mock watersheds to see if they correctly identified the ridgeline boundaries.

Your Mentor LeRoy is passionate about education; his wife is an educator at Hoopa Elementary and he believes that early education is one of the best ways to instill a sense of responsibility and stewardship. In the past, members have taught at four local schools, Orleans Elementary in Orleans, Jack Norton in Pecwan, Hoopa Elementary/High in Hoopa, and Trinity Valley Elementary in Willow Creek, dedicating one day a week to each school, and the other to prep and office work. Unlike many of the other sites, you will be responsible for creating a new curriculum each year that engages and challenges kids who already have a lot of first-hand knowledge of the rivers. Bring your own unique knowledge and skills to the table and show the kids an aspect of watersheds that maybe they hadn't known about before: water law, aquatic insects, etc. Finally, with all ages of students the more hands-on, active, and participatory the better.

Site / Region Specific Education Resources

When you go to each school to get teachers to sign up for Real Science, you may be overwhelmed by the number of teachers that are interested in having you in the classroom, however LeRoy has made it easier to limit the number of class rooms that you will go to by focusing on certain grade levels and rotating schedules every other year. It is a good idea to take a preliminary survey with you to your initial meeting; this will allow you to gauge what areas the teachers are most interested in, and also give you a chance to discuss what they are currently studying so you can incorporate these topics into your lessons. At the office there is a library of educational materials amassed throughout the years, which is very helpful for putting together your plan. In this library there are education-binders put together by past AmeriCorps members. It is recommended that you take some time to read through these binders to see what went well and what went wrong for previous members, and thereby have an idea of what may or may not help you in your preparation for the education season.



Local Ecology



Mountains

Orleans is located amidst steep, rugged mountains. The area is dominated by the Trinity-Alps Mountains to the southeast and the Klamath, Siskiyou and Marble Mountains to the north.

Rivers

The community revolves around the Klamath River and its tributaries, which are the second largest salmon fishery in California. Locals hold very strong beliefs about the state of the river and what should be done to enhance and restore it to its former glory. The Klamath is at the center of the largest dam-removal proposal in the world, and many agencies are involved in this long-standing quest. The Salmon River, on the other hand, is a relatively pristine river that maintains one of the last runs of Spring Chinook in California. This is the river that you will live near, and most likely enjoy recreationally. When the summer heat is getting the best of you, try and head down to the river and take a dip at one of the many breathtaking swimming holes located just minutes from Oak Bottom, or if you are a kayaker enjoy the Salmon's world-class whitewater runs.

Trails

There are miles and miles of great backpacking trails all around! Check out the Wooley Creek trail for a moderately difficult hike through a recent burn; the Salmon Summit trail for an easy day hike with some nice vistas and an alpine lake; or head an hour away to the Russian Wilderness to see the highest conifer diversity in the world. These are just a few of the many first-rate hiking opportunities available in your backyard.

Wildflowers

You'll notice the seasons by the wildflowers—new species in bloom every 2-3 weeks during the spring and summer along every meadow, roadside, and riverbank.

Wildlife

Aside from the salmon, there are bears, foxes, deer, osprey, bald eagles, heron, spotted owls, sturgeon, western toads, beavers, and the elusive Sasquatch native to the area.

Weather

Mild winters—snow and rain, and frequent power outages. Temps: 20s-50s. Your USFS home is heated by woodstove, although equipped with central heating and AC. Warm, mostly sunny springs: 60s-80s. Hot, dry summers range between 80s-110s. Fall is everyone's favorite season, with changing colors, sunny skies and mild temps.



Fires

Lots of interesting fire ecology and management going on in this area, with a very active fire season in the summer and fall. There is a local push for more restoration of a natural fire regime with prescribed burns.

Native Culture and Land Management

The local tribes (Karuk, Yurok, Hoopa) have been making great strides to maintain and revive their cultures, and are influential in the management and research of the natural resources. Many of the local experts are tribal elders or ceremonial leaders and they play strongly into scientific and political action.

The USFS is a multiple use land management agency within this river community. The Orleans Fisheries Program is centered around protection, enhancement and restoration of anadromous fish species. Local non-profit citizen groups like the Mid-Klamath Watershed Council, the Orleans-Somes Bar Fire Safe Council, and the Salmon River Restoration Council have taken up the reins to collaborate on aquatic and terrestrial projects. Many of the prominent families came here as “back-to-the-landers” or to live on one of the still-active communes. The local populace is full of land-management and community design visionaries.

Housing and Local Resources

Housing Contact List

Currently, housing is provided by the Forest Service. Members stay in a 3-bedroom, 1.5 bath modular home with a woodstove, fridge, stove/oven, sink, and simple furniture. The house is located at the Oak Bottom Compound, 3 miles east of Somes Bar on the Salmon River Rd. You may have to pay a small amount to stay there but it really is worth it. High speed internet is available, along with cable and phone; however you will have to pay for these out of your own pocket. Another condition of the housing agreement is that you do annual improvement projects during your term of service (eg. collect firewood for the next years’ AmeriCorps, and leave the house in better condition than you found it). It’s a great deal!!

Local Resource Contacts

Neighbors

There are a number of ex-WSP members in the Orleans/Somes Bar river community. Charles Wickman, Jillienne Bishop and Tanya Chapple are ex-WSP members who work at MKWC. They are friendly and willing to discuss any questions you may have during your service. Chris and Terra Hatton, ex-WSP members who own the Salmon River Outpost, are also a wealth of local knowledge. Oak Bottom housing is quiet complex. USFS seasonal crews usually arrive around May through the summer season.

Co-workers

Anna Hall and Matt Cavin are two ex-WSP members that work for the fisheries crew as biological technicians, and are happy to help or answer any questions.



Community Information

Community Demographics

Orleans Population 630, elevation 413. (This is where you work)

Somes Bar Population 225, elevation 527. (This is where you live)

Former AmeriCorps Members Quite a few of the residents are actually former Watershed Stewards Project members, and even more have worked at some point on the fish crew at the Forest Service. Even if people don't know who you are, they pretty much know what you do and appreciate your work.

"Back-to-the-Land" ers Plenty of people who moved out here in the past 30 years to create the life they've always dreamed of—working the land, growing their own organic food and herbs, living in a scenic, rustic cabin in the mountains, far away from the hassles of electricity, phone, internet, and sometimes even running water.

Locals According to town folklore, you're not a "local" until you've lived here for at least 30 years. While there are a few established families that qualify both as "back-to-the-landers" and local yokels by this definition, the real locals usually came here long ago as miners, foresters, homesteaders, or just people that were sick of the world as it was and wanted to get away from it all.

At least 1/3 of the community (or more) are Native American, and their culture and beliefs are a very important aspect of this river community.

Community Services

Groceries Orleans Market and Salmon River Outpost. However, most people end up getting the bulk of their groceries "on the coast" (in Arcata or Eureka). The Orleans Market is about what you might expect of a very small-town grocery store, but it is a five-minute walk from the Forest Service building and has good hours. The Salmon River Outpost (commonly known as the Somes Bar Store) is an organic foods mecca in the wilderness, deli, coffee shop, bookstore, post office, and art gallery all rolled into one, which is run by WSP alums Chris and Tara Hatton.

Health Clinic The Karuk offices in Orleans have a clinic with a really great doctor. He is also available to call if emergencies arise. However, your AmeriCorps insurance does not cover this clinic, so for anything routine or anticipated, it's probably best to find a physician in Willow Creek or on the coast. (The list of qualifying physicians is on the insurance website).

Post Office There is a post office in Orleans, and PO Boxes at the Somes Bar Store. You'll want to sign up for a PO Box as soon as you get to Orleans (or even before), because you won't be able to sign up for a phone or energy services without it. The PO Boxes in Somes Bar are free.

Library The Humboldt County Library Bookmobile comes to Orleans once a month. Library cards are free, and the selection is pretty good for a Bookmobile.



Entertainment and Community Events

Resources for Affordable Entertainment Options

Non-profit fundraisers, Third Thursday Café, environmental education events

There are quite a few community events that are combo community gatherings, dances, dinners, music festivals, environmental education events, and fundraisers for the local non-profits (Mid-Klamath Watershed Council, Salmon River Restoration Council, etc.) MKWC hosts Third Thursday Café, where once a month a community member volunteers to create a menu and cook for the community. Dinners usually go for around 12 dollars, but are really just suggested donations. You can have the opportunity to be the chef, or just go and enjoy great food with the community. You can often get in for free if you volunteer. This is an excellent way to meet people, and there are always plenty of events that need volunteers.

Sweats at Butler, Volleyball at Pierce Ranch, USFS Softball, Impromptu Events

There are a few weekly events where you can go meet people, sweat in a sauna, or play volleyball with some of the locals. All are free, but bring a dish for potluck.

Usually for the first 4-6 weeks of summer, before it gets unbearably hot, the crews at the USFS organize softball games Wednesdays after work. It can be hit or miss whether enough people show up to field two teams, but even if there aren't enough players, a modified game will be played.

There is actually quite a happening social scene around here, so once you meet a few people, you will likely find things to do relatively quickly. There's also always room to create your own social gatherings. These things pop up quickly, and people find out by word-of-mouth, usually after work at the Somes Bar Store.

Recurring Event List

Mando-Jam at Sandy Bar

Late June/Early July. The amount of talent around here is pretty astonishing, for being such a small community. Lots of good jammers. They're really fun to listen to and if you can play a musical instrumental just join in.

Salmon River Dives

Late July. The whole community gathers to do a snorkel survey of the whole Salmon River, from the headwaters to the mouth, to count spring Chinook. Get involved!

Other events

Again, keep your ears to the ground—there are plenty of events going on. Also keep in touch with your buddies on the coast, as they will keep you informed of the many music festivals and events worth going to out there.



Helpful Hints

Things to expect at the USFS Orleans site:

Work

One of the primary goals at this site is to protect, enhance and restore the local fishery and their associated habitat. Be prepared to work hard! Your mentor strongly believes *"We can leave no greater gift for our children: show no greater respect for our forefathers, than to leave watersheds entrusted to our care healthier, more diverse and more productive"*.

While you're working on education and outreach activities, your organizational and multi-tasking abilities will be tested! If you're doing your job well, you can rack up a lot of hours pretty quick but don't worry about taking a few scheduled days off if you arrange pre-approval. Your mentor will help you establish individual goals for the year so work with him to ensure you achieve success!

Socializing

Lots of people hibernate (or get snowed in) during the winter, so be prepared for this slow pace until things warm up. It's a good time to plow through some good books you've been meaning to read over the past few years, or get a Netflix account and watch all the movies you've been meaning to see, or take walks or mountain bike rides in the beautiful outdoors. Although there are other homes at Oak Bottom (where you live), don't expect too much interaction until work crews arrive in the summer. Once that happens, plan on swimming a lot. Your mentor also loves BBQ's on the river and holiday gatherings at his home with his family so join in the fun! The best way to meet people is to get involved in community events at the start of your term and remain active throughout the year.